

## IN THE CLAIMS

Please **AMEND** the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:
  - a port configured to receive a write command frame having a header with an OX\_ID or RX\_ID exchange identifier, as well as ~~and defining an initiating Host and [[a ]]target identifiers;~~
  - a trapping mechanism configured to trap the write command frame; and
  - a processor configured to process the trapped write command frame by modifying the OX\_ID of the write command frame header to include a new value of the OX\_ID exchange identifier before sending the write command frame to the target;wherein the processor is further configured to initialize a receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) of a transfer ready command frame ~~with the~~ by assigning a value to the RX\_ID and send the transfer ready command frame to the initiating Host before receiving a transfer ready command frame from the target.
2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is an initiating Switch coupled to the Host in a first SAN.
3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the processor of the initiating Switch is further configured to modify the write command frame before forwarding the write command to the target.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the apparatus uses the value as a handle for accessing information pertaining to the write command session in a sessions ID table.
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the processor of the initiating Switch is further configured to issue a Transfer Ready command to the Host.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is further configured to use the value as the RX\_ID for all communication related to the write frame between the apparatus and the Host.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is further configured to use the value as the OX\_ID in all communications between the apparatus and the target.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the initiating Switch is further configured to transfer additional data frames to the target when the initiating Switch receives a Transfer Ready command associated with the write command frame from the target.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the Switch is a target Switch coupled to the target.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the target Switch forwards the write command frame to the target.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the target Switch forwards data frames associated with the write command frame to the target after receiving a Transfer Ready command from the target.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the target Switch is further configured to buffer the data frames prior to receipt of the Transfer Ready command.

14. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the target Switch is further configured to maintain a sessions ID table and to use the OX\_ID of the write command frame as an index to the session corresponding to the write command.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the target Switch is further configured to modify the RX\_ID value for all communication related to the write command frame between the target Switch and the Host.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the target Switch is further configured to modify the OX\_ID value with communications between the target Switch and the target.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the apparatus is further configured to use the RX\_ID value of trapped write commands to specify the amount of buffer space needed for the write command and use the write command frame to request the needed buffer space.

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the apparatus is further configured to use the RX\_ID value of trapped write commands to specify the amount of buffer space larger than needed for the write command and use the additional buffer space for subsequent write commands so that the apparatus need not wait for a Transfer Ready command to transfer data related to the subsequent write command.

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is further configured to, in the event the apparatus does not have sufficient buffer space for the write command, to either:

- (i) generate a busy status signal to the initiating Host;
- (ii) place the write command on a pending wait list; or
- (iii) forward the write command to the target.

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:  
a first SAN including the apparatus;  
a second SAN; and  
an inter-SAN network connecting the first SAN and the second SAN.

21-23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:  
receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command also including an originator exchange identifier (OX\_ID) value with an assigned value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) with a default value;

initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) ~~value to generate an initialized by~~  
assigning a value to the RX\_ID value;

sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX\_ID ~~value~~ to the host  
prior to receiving a transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready  
command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target;

modifying the originator exchange identifier (OX\_ID) of the write command ~~to include~~  
~~the initialized RX\_ID value~~ to generate a modified write command; and

forwarding the modified write command to the target.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising configuring the  
switch to forward data frames associated with the write command received in response to the  
transfer Ready command to the target.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein a second switch between  
the switch and the target receives data frames associated with the write command and buffers  
the data frames until a transfer ready command is received from the target.

27. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host  
identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write  
command also including an originator exchange identifier (OX\_ID) with an assigned value  
and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) with a default value;

means for initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) ~~value to generate an~~  
initialized RX\_ID by assigning a value to the RX\_ID value;

means for sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX\_ID ~~value to~~  
the host prior to receiving a transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the  
transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target;

means for modifying the originator exchange identifier (OX\_ID) of the write command  
~~to include the initialized RX\_ID value~~ to generate a modified write command; and

means for forwarding the modified write command to the target.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the apparatus is  
further configured to determine from the write command an amount of data to be written to the  
target, to ascertain whether it has sufficient storage space to buffer the amount of data, and to

send the transfer ready command frame to the initiating Host before receiving the transfer ready command from the target if the apparatus has determined that it has sufficient storage space to buffer the amount of data.

29. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command also including an originator exchange identifier (OX\_ID) with an assigned value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) with a default value;

forwarding the write command to the target;

initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) ~~value~~ to generate an initialized RX\_ID by assigning a value to the RX\_ID~~value~~; and

sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX\_ID~~value~~ to the host prior to receiving a transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target.

30. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory, at least one of the processor or the memory being for:

receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command also including an originator exchange identifier (OX\_ID) with an assigned value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) with a default value;

forwarding the write command to the target;

initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX\_ID) ~~value~~ to generate an initialized by assigning a value to the RX\_ID~~value~~; and

sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX\_ID~~value~~ to the host prior to receiving a transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target.

31. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the trapping mechanism is configured to trap the write command frame if the write command frame designates a predetermined Host\_ID and a predetermined target\_ID.